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SUBJECT: UNGA ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON HONDURAS; PRESIDENT ZELAYA SPEAKS

¶11. (U) SUMMARY: On June 29, President of the General Assembly (PGA) D'Escoto convened a meeting on the situation in Honduras, calling on the UNGA to join many countries in issuing a universal condemnation of the June 28 coup. Honduran PermRep Reina called the situation a tragic but transitional moment in Honduras and pressed the UNGA to condemn the coup and call for President Zelaya's return to office. He also pressed Member States to refuse to accept any other government other than President Zelaya's. Regional groups and Member States unanimously criticized the coup and most demanded Zelaya's return. Many States called on all actors to avoid violence, pressed for a restoration of the rule of law, and joined in solidarity with the Hondurans in refusing to recognize any other government.

¶12. (U) (SUMMARY CONT.) The following day, June 30, the General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the coup and demanding Zelaya's return. As the PGA announced U.S. co-sponsorship of the resolution, Member States erupted into thunderous applause. After its adoption, Honduran President Zelaya addressed the UNGA. He thanked those who were supportive of his government during the coup and the GA for its adoption by consensus of the resolution. He spoke broadly about democracy and the common good and listed his efforts to alleviate poverty and ensure rights for the people of Honduras. He detailed his expulsion from Honduras and commented that he plans to return to finish his term as a "humble servant." END SUMMARY.

¶13. (U) In a June 29 General Assembly meeting following the June 28 coup in Honduras, President of the General Assembly D'Escoto condemned the attack on Honduran democracy, which he described as a "throwback to another era." He added that Latin America and the Caribbean have the "ignominious" record for the most military coups in the world. In a gratuitous swipe at the U.S., D'Escoto referenced the 1970s and 1980s, claiming that nearly every country on the continent "was humiliated, subjugated, violated and brutalized by military regimes that usurped power for the sake of promoting the interests of the U.S. and its local caretakers who always claimed to be motivated by the need to defend their own peculiar understanding of democracy and freedom." D'Escoto said that the region and regional groups, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Rio Group, the Bolivarian Alliance (ALBA) and the Central American Integration System (SICA), have demanded the immediate resolution of the situation, and he called on the General Assembly to add its voice to the universal condemnation.

¶14. (U) Honduran PermRep Reina said this was a tragic but transitional moment in Honduras. Honduras had lost its democratic system and that "grave consequences" follow the absence of democracy. Reina remarked that President Zelaya

sought only to strengthen the democracy in Honduras by seeking the people's opinion of extending the term limits for the President in a non-binding referendum. He thanked PGA D'Escoto and Secretary-General Ban for clearly calling for the safety of President Zelaya and his family, calling for Zelaya's return to office, and refusing to accept any other government. He said that he hoped the General Assembly would echo their call.

REGIONAL GROUPS

¶ 15. (U) Venezuela, speaking for ALBA, and Cuba, speaking for the Non-aligned Movement, condemned the coup in the strongest terms. They demanded Zelaya's return and refused to recognize any other government, calling on the international community to do the same. Mexico, on behalf of the Rio Group, and Chile, representing UNASUR, also condemned the coup. They rejected the unconstitutional use of armed forces and arbitrary detention, called on all political actors to avoid violence and pressed for the restoration of Zelaya to his functions as President. The Czech Republic on behalf of the EU stressed the importance of restoring the constitution and underlined the need for fair and transparent elections in ¶ 2009. CARICOM and the Arab Group echoed similar messages.

MEMBER STATES

¶ 16. (U) All Member States unanimously condemned the coup and most called for a restoration of Zelaya to his functions as President. Many states also called for a return to the rule of law and resolution of the conflict within the framework of the constitution. Ambassador DiCarlo reiterated the OAS condemnation of the coup, calling for a restoration of constitutional order. She urged all actors to resolve disputes peacefully through dialogue and pressed the international community to join with the people of Honduras in demanding a peaceful restoration of democracy. Venezuelan

PermRep Valero called the situation in Honduras a "repressive attempt to stop the progress of democracy," adding that a "new world" was emerging and Latin America is breaking the mold of old, neo-liberal democracy. Cuban PermRep Moreno said that "truth and justice will return to the land of Morazan," commenting that "the time of military dictatorships and forcibly imposed governments is gone, never to return." Nicaraguan PermRep Rubiales stated that there was no part of the world that would "recognize putschists" and there could be "no more banana republics."

¶ 17. (U) All remaining speakers echoed similar messages, including Jamaica, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Ecuador, Algeria, Bolivia, Argentina, Colombia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, El Salvador, Spain, Costa Rica, Panama, Belize, Peru, and Uruguay.

UNGA ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON HONDURAS

¶ 18. (U) Another GA meeting was called on the morning of June 30, in order to hear from Honduran President Zelaya, who had just landed in the U.S. While awaiting his arrival, delegations met informally to negotiate the text of the Honduran Mission-drafted resolution. After intense negotiations, the Hondurans accepted several critical edits, including U.S.-proposed edits, which allowed both the U.S. and Canada to co-sponsor the draft thus consolidating the Western Hemisphere's unanimous condemnation of the coup, and allowing the EU to join consensus. As the PGA announced U.S. co-sponsorship, the General Assembly erupted into thunderous applause. The resolution was adopted by consensus (see full text para 13).

PRESIDENT ZELAYA ADDRESSES THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

¶ 19. (U) President Zelaya then told the GA that all countries from the United States to all dignitaries and ministers of Latin America "spoke to their humble servant" (i.e. himself), expressing outrage at the perpetrators of the coup in

Honduras. He praised the statements by the leaders of the United Nations, OAS, CARICOM, UNASUR and ALBA as well as the resolution just adopted by the General Assembly. He spoke for over an hour without prepared remarks, going into great detail about his efforts as President to improve the lot of the people of Honduras, including improving the gaps in trade imbalances, adjusting the minimum wage, and putting food into the mouth of workers. He claimed that in his first two years he had significantly reduced the poverty level, thereby "launching the stream of social progress," which he "never thought would be viewed as a crime."

¶10. (U) Regarding the charges levied against him in Honduras, Zelaya said that people have the right to participate in a democracy, which is why he chose to launch a non-biased public opinion poll, "like the Gallup poll," to gauge the will of the people on extending the term limits of the President. Honduran citizens have the right to be consulted on matters that affect them, he commented. Although a judge declared this illegal, Zelaya said he felt that he was abiding by Honduran law. Since the coup, Honduras has been "in paralysis," Zelaya remarked. He claimed that passenger buses had been fired upon, 160 people had been injured, ministers had been arrested, 140 people had been beaten and citizens were taking to the streets. Military officials in green uniforms were playing music loudly to avoid answering any questions, he claimed.

¶11. (U) In detailing the events that lead to his exile, the President said that he was awakened by shouts and screams early on the morning he was taken. He said armed officials broke into his house, pointing rifles at him and shots were fired. Zelaya said he ran downstairs to hide from the bullets and tried to call for help on his mobile phone. Zelaya raised his voice and described how armed men in full combat gear "lifted the hinges off the door," charging the room, aiming at him with eight rifle and commanding that he drop the phone. Prepared to die for his cause, Zelaya said that he told the men to shoot him, "if those were their orders," and end his suffering. Instead, he was told that they were "taking him away." Several hours later, Zelaya said that he was pushed out of a plane at the airport in Costa Rica, still in his night clothes. He was met by the President of Costa Rica, he commented, and shortly thereafter received calls from "all presidents."

¶12. (U) Zelaya opined that being the President is simply serving as an instrument for the people of Honduras, the office has "no significance beyond that." Zelaya said he plans to return to Honduras to finish his term as a "humble servant." He commented that while he always forgives and

pardons, "the dignity of nations will not forgive this act of barbarity."

¶13. (U) Begin text of an informal translation of the resolution:

The General Assembly,

Deeply concerned by the coup d'etat that took place in the Republic of Honduras on 28 June 2009,

Deeply concerned also by the acts of violence against diplomatic personnel and accredited officials in the Republic of Honduras in violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations,

Recalling the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, and conventions on international peace and security,

Gravely concerned by the breakdown in the constitutional and democratic order that has led to the endangerment of security, democracy and the rule of law, and that has jeopardized the security of Honduran and foreign citizens,

¶1. Condemns the coup d'etat in the Republic of Honduras that has interrupted the democratic and constitutional order and the legitimate exercise of power in Honduras, and resulted in the removal of the democratically elected President of that country, Mr. Jose Manuel Zelaya Rosales;

¶2. Demands the immediate and unconditional restoration of the legitimate and Constitutional Government of the President of the Republic, Mr. Jose Manuel Zelaya Rosales, and of the legally established authority in Honduras so that he fulfills the mandate for which he was democratically elected by the Honduran people;

¶3. Decides to firmly and categorically call upon all states not to recognize any other government than that of the Constitutional President, Mr. Jose Manuel Zelaya Rosales;

¶4. Expresses its firm support for the regional efforts undertaken in conformity with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter with a view to the resolution of the political crisis in Honduras;

¶5. Requests the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly in a timely manner with regard to the evolving situation in that country.

End Text.
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